

REMARKS

Edinburgh Review
Pretended TOWN-COUNCIL'S Address to the PUBLIC,
containing an Attempt to justify the prostitution of the Funds of
the Community to Political Jobs.

THE Address I am about to examine was published in the
news-papers on Friday last, and circulated among the inha-
bitants on Saturday. The positions it lays down, and the
arguments it employs, afford fresh proofs of that factious and in-
temperate conduct which the council Junta in the interest of Sir
Laurence Dundas have uniformly exhibited during the whole of
this political campaign.

Passage the First.

The gentlemen alluded to in the declamatory publication of the
trades of Edinbuthg of the 7th instant, beg leave, in reply thereto,
to acquaint their fellow-citizens with the real state of facts.

A part of the council met, *not* consisting of a *legal quorum*,
without the authority of the *Lord Provost* as presiding officer, and
upon a *notorial copy* of the sheriff's precept, *did* elect Mr Mil-
ler member of parliament.

Another part of the council, consisting of a *legal quorum*, with
the *Lord Provost* presiding, and possessed of the sheriff's precept,
did elect Sir Laurence Dundas.

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These gentlemen seem not to understand the meaning of the word *fact*. They have, of late, been so much occupied with political delusion, that they appear to have converted the terms *truth* and *falsehood*, and to have been unable to distinguish reality from fiction. Is it a *real fact*, that Mr Miller was elected by an *illegal*, and Sir Laurence by a *legal* quorum of council? Is not this the very subject submitted by both parties to the decision of parliament? The *fact*, therefore, can have no existence till that decision is given. If that supreme court decrees Mr Miller's election to be *legal*, this town-council *fact* is then converted into a *real falsehood*. Is it decent in this junto to assume the character of judges in a question that waits the solemn determination of the great senate of the nation? What augments the insolence of their obtrusion, they are *parties* to the litigation in dispute.

Mr Miller is said to have been elected without the *authority* of the then *Lord Provost*. The indecacy of this junto is not to be expressed! They have repeatedly exhibited this unfortunate gentleman with all the wantonness of cruelty. Not contented with dragging him from his peaceful retreat in the country, and giving him the appearance of business, when he was incapable of acting, they again force him upon the eyes of the public, both in their political papers, and in the courts of law. How could this gentleman, when under the pressure of the heaviest calamity to which human nature is subjected, give his authority to any public transaction? Is it not consistent with their knowledge, that he was then incapable of signing his own *name*? When unhumanly hurried into town, did they not make an exclusive property of his person? Was not all access to him denied, except to Sir Laurence's friends? If he had even been able to give his *authority* to the most trifling business, was not that rendered impracticable by their indecent monopoly of his person? Every step, therefore, in the election of Sir Laurence Dun-

was said to have the *countenance or authority* of the late Lord Provost, must be considered as highly injurious to that gentleman, and as an insult to the common sense of the citizens.

Sir Laurence, these gentlemen alledge, was elected by a *legal quorum*, with the *Lord Provost* presiding, and possessed of the *sheriff's precept*? There is some degree of *art* in this sentence. It is meant to be insinuated, that this *Lord Provost* is the same person with the *Lord Provost* mentioned in the preceding paragraph. But, in reality, it is David Stewart, Esq; a *Lord Provost* who had no existence in that character when the sheriff executed his precept, and whose *pretensions* to that office are now the subject of legal discussion. They were indeed possessed of the sheriff's precept. But, how did they obtain possession of it? by feloniously with-holding it, to answer their own sinister purposes. This junto first commit iniquity, and then they accuse their opponents of the crime. They forcibly detain the precept, and then complain that it was not sooner produced. A behaviour so rude, and so enigmatical, must be left to their own explanation.

Passage the Second.

The sheriff and Mr Williamson city-clerk, *did*, however, *think* proper to execute indentures in favour of Mr Miller!

They *did* so; and it would have been a high misdemeanour if they had done otherwise.

Passage the Third.

Sir Laurence Dundas has petitioned the Honourable House of Commons against the election of Mr Miller; and the *idea* never existed

‘existed that any person but *himself* was to pay the *expence* of *that* petition.’

The *idea*, I believe, never did exist in the mind of the weakest citizen; and, therefore, this paragraph was entirely superfluous. But let us attend to the next.

Passage the Fourth

The town-council ALSO found it to be their DUTY to petition the Honourable House of Commons against *certain proceedings* of the sheriff and Mr Williamson, contrary to the *constitutional rights* of the city; and they empowered the Lord Provost to engage counsel to plead *their rights*.

It is this transaction which has alarmed all ranks of the citizens. How could a town-council, with the majority of a *single voice*, find it to be *their duty* to lead the city wantonly into the *expence* of supporting a petition to parliament; the object of which is to thwart the inclinations and the choice of their constituents? What are the *certain proceedings* of the sheriff and Mr Williamson? And how are these proceedings contrary to the *constitutional rights* of the city? If this junto had demonstrated the truth of these naked assertions, they might have passed uncensured. But they durst not be more explicit. Had they told the *real fact*, they would have delivered themselves in the following manner: ‘A considerable number of our party hold *American principles*, and are therefore anxious that Sir Laurence Dundas, who has openly declared war against the ministry, and the prosperity of his country, should be preferred to Mr Miller. Others of us entertain a jealousy of certain banking houses, and, of course, must employ every method that can tend

* to humble or depress them. For these, and *similar* weighty considerations, we are of opinion, that the *constitutional rights* of the city are infringed; that a law-suit should be immediately commenced, and that the expence of it should be defrayed out of the *funds* of the *community*. These are so well known to be the real motives which actuate the conduct of this *junto*, that they will not venture to controvert the fact. It is a shame thus to sport with the town's money, and with the understandings of their fellow-citizens.

Passage the Fifth.

* The expence of the city's petition, they are assured, will not exceed *fifty pounds*. Were it *ten* times that *sum*, they know Sir Laurence Dundas would be *happy* in the opportunity of being allowed to pay it; but the citizens who at present conduct the *affairs* of the *community*, will not *degrade themselves*, or the *community*, so much as to admit of Sir Laurence Dundas *paying* the *charge* of the defence of their rights. If the incorporations of trades shall think it *becoming* *them* to apply to the town-council to have the expence of the said petition paid from other *funds* than those of the city, there are several gentlemen of the town-council, who, *each of them*, will contend for the *honour* of *paying* the *whole* of the charge of a petition that *begs protection* to the rights of their fellow-citizens.

This is a wild rhapsody of folly and contradiction. The expence of the petition to parliament is to be only *fifty pounds*. Then a hint is given, that it may be *five hundred*: Sir Laurence, they know, would be *happy* to *pay* this *sum*: Several gentlemen of the town-council are contending for the *honour* of paying it; and yet it is actually to be *paid* out of the town's revenue! The manoeuvres of this *junto* have become so ridiculously absurd, that it is the opinion of
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not a few sensible men, that they are suggested by some *secret friend* of Mr Miller, and that the council junto swallow the bait. Mr Miller is the favourite of nine-tenths of the citizens; and this junto sedulously contrive every method of increasing the general aversion to Sir Laurence Dundas! Conscious of the egregiousness of this last blunder, they insinuate that they would still rectify it, if the incorporations of trades should think it *becoming them* humbly to petition the town-council for that purpose. No such petition, they may be assured, will ever be presented. The court of session will decide the point.

Passage the Sixth.

‘ Since pecuniary matters are now become the subject of discussion in this political contention, it may be *proper*, as well as *just*, to observe, that it is believed the records of the public charitable institutions of this city *do shew*, that Sir Laurence Dundas, so far from *bringing expence* upon the citizens, has given more *money* to *charitable purposes*, than the whole of the other members of parliament or candidates for Edinburgh since the union.

The illiberality and futility of this paragraph are equally conspicuous. If Sir Laurence Dundas has *occasionally* assisted some of our public charities, Why annihilate the obligation by perpetually boasting of it? But, since it appears to be the object of this junto to destroy the political reputation of the good old Baronet, they cannot complain when I lend them a little assistance. Sir Laurence, when he first started as a candidate for Edinburgh, was advised by his friend *Commissioner Laurie*, then our chief magistrate, with a view to dazzle the eyes of the multitude, and to gain some popularity in the town, to distribute a few hundreds among our most needy hospitals. Is this

this charity ? I can tell, however, what was not *charity*. Sir Laurence, not many weeks ago, was applied to for a similar purpose : Mark his answer ; ' I shall consider of this matter till I learn the *fate* ' of my *election* ! ' But he lost his election, and carried off his *charity* along with his person.

Take another example of Sir Laurence's *liberality*, which his few friends have had the weakness to boast of. He subscribed one thousand pounds for raising the Edinburgh regiment, and he gained *eight thousand* at least by the nomination of officers to that very regiment :

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This change I can tell, however, what was not obvious. It is
known, not many weeks ago, was applied to for a similar purpose.
Mark his answer: "I shall consider of this matter till I learn the fate
of my adversary." But he left his election, and carried off his car-
riage along with his person.

Take another example of Sir James's weakness, which his few
friends have had the weakness to point out. He subscribed one thou-
sand pounds for raising the Edinburgh Regiments, and he gained eight
thousand at least by the nomination of officers to that very regiment.

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